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Saturday, December 22, 2007

Ron Paul for President

This blog has never before expressed an opinion about a specific political election. Unenumerated takes a long view and electioneering is generally not the most effective means of political action. Occasionally, however, there is a remarkable exception. Ron Paul's candidacy for President of the United States is the most remarkable such exception of our era.

Among the makeup-encrusted crop of TV-hyped politicians, Ron Paul stands alone in working, not to propagate mass media mythologies, but to preserve and restore our genuine freedoms and our highly evolved traditions. Where other politicians go on and on about "freedom" in order to justify wars and suppressions that deprive people of their lives, liberties, and properties, Ron Paul throughout his long career has labored to preserve and restore our freedoms. Ron Paul has worked to heal the wounds to liberty and the damages to our essential institutions that were inflicted by barbaric politics over the last century: the wars, the ethnic cleansings, the nationalizations, and the corruptions that have worked in tandem to destroy many of the freedoms our forefathers held dear. From property rights to privacy, the rights to bear arms and defend ourselves and our loved ones, rights to speak freely via technology old and new, rights to be free from false arrest and torture, the list of freedoms we once held but are now losing is long. Without a libertarian surge, a rising of people to rebuke the evils of the century now thankfully over, the barbarity of that century will have become fixed as the only reality we know, and we will be plunged into a long dark age.

Because Ron Paul is the only presidential candidate who puts a high priority on preserving and restoring property rights, the bedrock institution of modern economies, it is no surprise that he recently raised more money in a single day than any other person in U.S. political history. Ron Paul is the only presidential candidate in touch both with our highly evolved past and our networked future. He has moved beyond the mass-media prejudices that caused the twentieth century to march lock-step into genocidal wars and nationalization. So it is no surprise that Ron Paul's main strength is on the Internet and his main weakness is in the mass media.

Even if, as mass media polls currently imply, Ron Paul does not win the 2008 Republican nomination, his staying power and independence give him the potential to exert a libertarian influence on United States politics far beyond recent experience. Even if he doesn't win a single state, Paul is demonstrating that he has a substantial and loyal following. He will stay in the race to the very end, and Republicans will have to make valuable concessions to prevent him from becoming an independent candidate who would throw the election. No one man can heal the many injuries that freedom has suffered, nor the many damages that have been done to our highly evolved institutions. But Ron Paul's success will inspire many more lovers of our once and future liberties to step forward and make that future.

United States politics is delicately balanced between the traditional poles of right and left and may only need a small shove to push it

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Nick Szabo

"A premier thinker about history, law and economics, and the lessons they have for security." -- Adam Shostack, Emergent Chaos

"Szabo comes out with these essays that leave me in awe." -- Brian Dunbar

"Reading material that is eclectic, challenging and endlessly fascinating." -- Sean McGrath, Propylon

"Like most blogs worth my attention, this blog is updated only infrequently. That is because the authors of blogs worth my attention only post when they have something to say that is true, relevant and not already known by their audience. Most of the human race does not have the skill to know when an idea has these three properties. The skill is particularly rare in the fields of politics and economics, which is why this blog is such a rare and valuable thing." -- Richard Hollerith

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in the orthogonal libertarian direction. This is particularly true with respect to the institution with the most impact on our freedoms: the Supreme Court. If Paul falls short of becoming the Republican candidate I recommend to him that he request one or more Supreme Court nominees of his choice as the price of his support for the non-libertarian Republican candidate. On the Supreme Court there are four justices on the traditional left and four on the traditional right. As a result the one moderate justice, Justice Kennedy, exerts an overwhelmingly disproportionate influence. Four years of libertarian influence on the Presidency, with two or three seats on the Court up for grabs, could tilt the Court quite heavily towards a restoration of our libertarian Constitution, a restoration of life, liberty, and property rights in the United States.

Uniquely among mainstream politicians, Ron Paul thinks beyond mass media hype. He remembers and cares about the basic institutions that have made the United States a bastion of world liberty for most of the last 231 years, and will make it a "Shining City on a Hill" again in the future if we work to make it so. For those who love our once and future freedoms, now is the time to strike. Work and vote to elect Ron Paul for President in 2008.

Posted by Nick Szabo at 1:26 PM

4 comments:

Anonymous said...

"Even if he doesn't win a single state, Paul is demonstrating that he has a substantial and loyal following. He will stay in the race to the very end, and Republicans will have to make valuable concessions to prevent him from becoming an independent candidate who would throw the election"
If he doesn't win any state he won't stay to the end, and he has stated many times that he has absolutely no plans to become a libertarian, third party, candidate. I'm a supporter but I think part the problem is the constant articles saying he has no chance of winning, if we knew who was going to win or not we wouldn't have primaries. Stating he won't win affect how people see him, (as a fringe candidate, long shot, waste of your vote etc.), and really doesn't help discussion about what is wrong, and right, with America. As I have asked before "I dare anyone to find me a poll that has consistently pick the winner of the nomination in the last twenty, thirty, forty years conducted at this point of the process"

P.S. I noticed that you tried very hard to write it has a perception from polls and not as a "matter of fact", which is different from most other authors. I wasn't expressly talking about you.

2:58 PM

Barry Brownstein said...

Nick,

I enjoyed reading your very thoughtful endorsement of Ron Paul. You emphasis on the importance of property rights is spot on.

Although my blog is does not have political focus, I too felt strongly enough to endorse Ron Paul. See my post Ron Paul and America's Founding Principles

3:18 PM

nick said...

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Barry, that's a great article, thanks. I'm a big fan of Rose Wilder Lane.

Anonymous, I agree that we shouldn't count out anybody's chances to win at this point. Huckabee and Paul are both great examples of candidates doing well (the former in polls and the latter financially and organizationally) that few expected to be factors a few months ago. But I wanted to emphasize that the "chance to win" is not the only reason candidates win support and is not the only political impact a primary candidate can have.

Even if Paul doesn't run himself, that wouldn't stop him from endorsing the Libertarian candidate or at least failing to endorse the non-libertarian Republican candidate if he can't win concessions. Or he might make only a lukewarm endorsement of the Republican nominee instead of putting his money and organization to work for him. That's a game all the candidates play. Of course, it will help greatly if Paul gets plenty of delegates for the leading candidates to bargain for, but his general ability to raise money and organize is also a great bargaining chip. The November 2008 election as with the last two will likely be close, and Ron Paul's avid supporters, who have demonstrated an astounding organizational and financial clout, are a prize swing group that Republicans, Libertarians, and perhaps even Democrats will be fighting over if Paul continues his great money raising and makes a good showing in several states. And, I agree that besides all these he does, astoundingly, also have a shot at winning outright -- which would truly be a shot heard 'round the world.

4:02 PM

Anonymous said...

I hope he runs as a third party. It's a crapshoot as to which of the other parties would hemorrhage more votes, and of course something unexpected could happen and he might win (indeed, the only possible scenario).

One thing to note, though: It could give HR Clinton a 10-20% better shot at winning. B Clinton's staff estimated he could never get over 43% plurality without a third party candidate involved. I figure the hazardous misrule since 2000 may have bumped that up a bit, but the will-never-vote-for-HRC base probably compensates.

5:24 PM

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